Relief & Misrelief

Mark 9:24 Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

The words of the father of the epileptic relative to his son's healing. Jesus had inspired the father to exercise his faith. "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth," This man's faith made possible the healing of his son. It is the believing man who accomplishes things. All successful men are strong believers. They are positive, constructive, purposeful. Men of vision and determination. Men of direction and of action. These are the kind of men whom God can help. And He does help them!

We Xns are supposed to believe enough to remove mountains. We have our doctrine about God, about Christ, about man, about Salvation, Sanctification, the Holy Spirit, Baptism, Eternal Life, etc. Ours is not a discovery of God thru nature, but a revelation of God by Himself thru His Son, Jesus Christ. Then, why is it, that this father of the epileptic who did not have a belief in all these doctrines, who knew nothing of them, made possibe the healing of his son by wat little belief he had, while we Xns with all our beliefs seldom accomplish half as much?

Jesus said, "If thou have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, "Remove unto yonder place"; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." And James said, "Faith without works is dead."

The creedal belief of many Xns is but a matter of opinion, an intellectual assent that does not affect their lives by moving their will to do things, to act in certain definite ways as a consequence of their faith. Consequently, when the emergencies and crises of life come to them their belief is of little help to them.

Then, too, some Xns live upon their past experiences of faith and have no experiences of the present time in matters of faith. Just as men retire from active business and live on the income of their past earnings many Xns retire from active faith and live on their belief of yesterday. But there is a difference. Money can be put to interest and be made to yield dividends, but the faith of yesterday cannot be made to supply the necessary faith for today by retiring from the active business of believing. Faith, like ourselves, is a living thing that must be fed and exercised and kept alive.

Bearing all this in mind, I believe that it would be profitable for everyone of us to examine his beliefs and his faith to determine how much of them is really active believing that brings results according to our actual needs and how much of them is mere opinion or the faith of yesterday which proves innefectual in emergency or crisis.

For example, take the first statement of the Apostles Creed- I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. It is nt necessary for us to argue the existance of God. That is taken for granted by practically everone, Xn or otherwise But what does your belief in God amount to? Whzt, in fact, is your belief? What kind of a God do you believe in?

God is the foundation of all religions. He is the foundation of our Xn religion. No religion can be built upon any other foundation. And the foundation of any great structure is of vital importance to the safety and security of the superstructure which rests upon it.

Let us consider the two aspects of God as set forth in the Apostle's Creed. God as maker of heaven and earth, and God the Father Almighty.

I. God as Creator, maker of heaven and earth.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Back of all creation is God. What significance has this so far as your belief in God is concerned? Let me give you a little hint at what it signifies to me.

2. In catechism I learned that God was Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable, in his being, wisdom and power.

a. Infinite. Made up of all finite. As the parts together form the whole so all finite things go to make up the infinite. The sum-total of all finite is the full manifestation of God in creation, just as all the parts put together in a working whole go to make up a certain make of automobile.

Every part shows forth the maker who planned the whole Nothing so insignificant or small but that expresses God.

b. Eternal. Just as the ~~////////~~ total of all parts go to make up the whole, so the total of the measurements of time go to make up eternity. A minute is as vital a part of eternity as is a thousand years. Your little span of

3. years is just as much an integral part of eternity as the period of history covering the Roman Empire.

c. Unchangeable. The only thing in the whole universe that is not changing is change itself. Everything ele apparently, is changing. All being so far as we can kn know it is changeable. There can be no growth without change. There is a law and order governing all change that seemingly is fixed. We have no proof of the un- changeableness of God, but his manifestation in creatio is on the basis of change. Then the changeableness and decay of earth must be a part of the unchangeableness of God. Growth must be one of the unchangeable laws od God.

3. I believe in God, ¢ŧ¢¢ŧ¢ maker of heaven and earth has for me more than a religious significance. I am interested in the discoveries of those who are studying the processes of growth and change in nature. Scneitifi research has much to tell me about God the creator. Likewise philosophy which aims to interpret created existance to us can throw much light on my belief in God as maker of heaven and earth.

II. I believe in God the Father Almighty. The conception of the Fatherhood of God is not original with Xty. It is almost universal. Many other than Xn can repeat repeat with us this portion of the Apostle s Cheed. But peoples of varying beliefs hold varying conceptions of th the fatherhood of God.

The fullest light on God the Father Almighty is found in Jesus Christ. He is our interpretor of God as Father.

Christ makes us true children of God.

Christ makes us true brothers one to another